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ANNUAL REPORT

**SOUTH CAROLINA
COMMISSION
FOR THE BLIND**

FISCAL YEAR 1980-1981



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STATE DOCUMENTS

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State Budget and Control Board

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SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

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The South Carolina Commission for the Blind is in compliance with the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and all requirements imposed pursuant thereto to the end that no person shall, on the grounds of sex, race, age, color, national origin, or handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the provision of any care or service. Any client participant, potential client, or interested person who is of an opinion that benefits are provided on a discriminatory basis has the right to file a complaint with the State Agency or Federal Agency, or both.

Respectfully Submitted,
 COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
 Maxine R. Howles
 Commissioner

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LEGAL BLINDNESS QUALIFICATIONS

1. Legal blindness shall be defined as a level of central visual acuity, 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best corrective lens available, or a disqualifying field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than twenty degrees and which is sufficient to incapacitate one for self-support, or an 80% loss of visual efficiency resulting from visual impairment in more than one function of the eye, including visual acuity for distance and near visual fields, ocular mobility, and other ocular functions and disturbances.
2. "Severe visual disability" is defined as any progressive pathological condition of the eye or eyes supported by an acceptable eye examination, which in the opinion of the examiner may or will result in legal blindness within 24 months.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

September 1, 1981

The Honorable Richard W. Riley
Governor of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina

Dear Governor Riley:

Client services were maintained at the highest level possible during Fiscal Year 1980-1981 despite budgetary restraints on both the Federal and State level. Employees took on extra work loads to compensate for a loss in personnel, but direct services to clients were affected very little. In short, everyone contributed to ease the monetary crunch.

The Commission for the Blind has always dedicated itself to meeting the special needs of the state's blind and visually impaired, and Fiscal Year 1980-1981 presented the Agency with many difficult tasks to perform in achieving that goal. We did, however, provide the best possible service within our means. We are proud of our accomplishments, and we are pleased to present to you this compilation of our achievements.

Respectfully Submitted,
COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
Maxine R. Bowles
Commissioner

COMMISSION BOARD

1. Mr. Allan C. MustardColumbia
(Chairman - 2nd Congressional District)
2. Clay W. Evatt, Jr., M.D.Charleston
(Vice-Chairman - 1st Congressional District)
3. Mrs. Earlene Gardner Aiken
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(5th Congressional District)
5. Mrs. Mattie B. GatlinNorth Charleston
(Member-at-Large)
6. Mrs. Patricia L. Patrick.....Darlington
(6th Congressional District)
7. Mr. Samuel L. Zimmerman Greenville
(4th Congressional District)

ADMINISTRATION

Electronic computers with disc drives and memory banks found their way into the in-house operations of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind in Fiscal Year 1980-1981. An on-site computer was put into use by the Data Processing Unit to coordinate all of the information relating to the Agency and its services. The Unit completely revised and updated the Agency's Register of Blind and Visually Impaired South Carolinians. The Register is now able, for the first time, to provide a look at the demography of blindness in the state. This information is limited, though, to clients known by the Agency, and not all of the legally blind and visually impaired within the state's border. In addition, the Unit is now working on Phase II of the Agency's overall Management Information System Project which involves developing a Client Information System for the Prevention of Blindness Department.

Budget cutbacks during the year forced the Agency to cut costs in almost every area except direct client benefits. A seven percent personnel cutback was ordered of all State agencies, which the Commission for the Blind met without affecting those clients in need. Employees in the Agency did a commendable job of doubling up and sharing extra work loads in order to maintain levels of service.

In-state travel expenses were trimmed and all out-of-state travel was banned for the remainder of the Federal fiscal year.

Due to an Agency-imposed hiring freeze during the fiscal year, only ten of the 20 positions vacated by retiring and terminating employees were filled. A true team spirit was exemplified by the willingness of each staff member to assume extra duties in order to continue client services without interruption.

In light of budget restraints, each staff development project was examined carefully before approval. Even so, 96% of all employees received some type of job-related training during the year. A graduate level course, "Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology of the Eye," was one of the most successful of the year with 54 staff members completing the requirements.

There were two new appointees to the Governing Board of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. Mrs. Mattie Bell Gatlin, of North Charleston, was selected to serve as the Member-at-Large, while Mrs. Patricia Patrick was chosen to fill the unexpired term of the late Mr. A. Peter Anselmo, who represented the Sixth Congressional District.

Mrs. Mary A. Blanks, Executive Secretary to Commissioner Maxine Bowles, retired from work with the State after 30 plus years. She spent almost all of her years working for agencies serving the blind, and had been with the Commission for the Blind since its inception in 1966.

The Consumer Advisory Committee provided technical assistance and input to the Agency in the development of an Independent Living Grant Proposal. The Agency hopes to establish a Center for Independent Living in South Carolina to act as a clearinghouse for those people in need of independent living skills. Two new members were selected to serve on the Committee. They are Dr. William A. Johnson, representing the South Carolina Ophthalmological Association, and Dr. Strother Pope, who will serve as the liaison for the South Carolina Medical Association. And, at its last meeting of the fiscal year, the Committee began work on a revision of its by-laws.

A new Agency brochure was distributed to the general public. It contained updated information on the various services offered by the Commission, and was designed in an "easy to read and understand" fashion. Blindcraft products were featured in a new picture/description brochure that was mailed to hundreds of consumers and retail outlets in an effort to increase sales for blind craftsmen.

Radio receivers for blind citizens in the state were the object of a grant proposal written by the South Carolina Educational Television Commission's Educational Radio Division and endorsed by the Commission for the Blind. The grant, if approved, would make available \$100,000 for the purchase of special, fixed frequency receivers to be loaned to blind citizens to enable them to hear the special radio programming designed for them.

Another grant proposal endorsed by the Commission for the Blind was one written by the University of South Carolina College of Education. This proposal described the need for a research and training center on vision to be housed at the University's Columbia campus. The center will concern itself with research in the psychological and social aspects of blindness.

Blind citizens across the state received assistance in completing their yearly income tax forms through a program sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service and the Commission for the Blind. Working space was made available in all district Commission offices for an IRS volunteer who helped blind people with their taxes for

free. The program was fairly successful in its first year, and will be offered again.

The Commission's annual training conference was held at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center in August. Workshops were conducted to deal with problems incurred by the various departments of the Agency, and a banquet and informal cookout gave all employees a chance to mingle and renew friendships. An award, the Commissioner's Cup, was presented to the Florence district office for their dedication and service to the blind. The cup is a personal presentation from the Commissioner and is not awarded by the Agency.

Services to the State's legally blind and visually impaired were maintained at as high a level as possible taking into account the budget reductions suffered by the Agency during the year. Despite those reductions, employees and service providers worked diligently and beyond their responsibilities to make sure every request for assistance was handled in the best manner possible. This sense of pride and dedication will carry on into the new fiscal year and beyond as budget reductions become commonplace.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Vocational Rehabilitation is a process by which the blind and visually impaired are assisted in finding and maintaining gainful employment. The Vocational Rehabilitation counselor attempts to identify those problems preventing employment, and through an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP) strive for job placement. The IWRP contains specific objectives that need to be met by the client. Rehabilitation services are provided to help meet the objectives that will determine if the individual becomes employed. These rehabilitation services include job development and placement, medical attention to correct or improve the client's visual disabilities, psychological and physical adjustment counseling, vocational training, occupational tools and equipment, and professional guidance. Each client is observed on the job for a minimum of 60 days to insure that the client is able to perform the required duties.

The VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION Department served 1,537 clients during Fiscal Year 1980-1981. Approximately 95% of these clients met the federal definition of severely disabled. A total of 258 clients were successfully rehabilitated with clients being placed in jobs involving food service work, industry, and professional skills such as teaching or computer programming.

Emphasis was placed on utilizing and coordinating similar benefits that might be applicable to providing services. Resources such as private health insurance, scholarships, Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income benefits were relied upon to continue services in light of financial limitations. During Fiscal Year 1980-1981, the Disability Determination Unit processed 529 applications for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits. Of those, 39% were allowed cash payments. All claims were screened for referral to other Agency departments for possible services.

Outreach programs in Florence, Rock Hill, Sumter, Greenville, and Aiken brought mobility and daily living skills to clients who, for one reason or another, could not travel to the Rehabilitation Center in Columbia. These programs afforded instructors the opportunity to work in the client's own environment, and tailor teaching methods to suit the client's individual needs. Orientation and mobility skills enabled each client to move from one location to another with safety, while daily living skills included cooking, sewing, cleaning, organizing, and maintaining a house.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Department continued to emphasize the importance of rehabilitating increased numbers of blind and severely visually impaired citizens, and to further develop new job opportunities.

Budget reductions during the year affected operations at the ELLEN BEACH MACK REHABILITATION CENTER. In all instances, these cutbacks were handled in a manner that curtailed direct client services as minimally as possible.

A decision was made in October to close the Center on weekends and send clients home by way of public transportation. This eliminated expenses incurred for custodial, janitorial, security and food service personnel during the time from Friday afternoon until Sunday night when clients returned. Although this was an inconvenience to some clients, it did not affect their instructional/rehabilitational program. Security arrangements for protection of the property and its contents were taken care of by Agency personnel.

The deaf/blind program, funded by a grant from the Helen Keller National Center, was very productive in its first year. Employees in the Center were trained in American Sign Language and the psycho/social aspects of deafness. Six deaf/blind clients were served in the Center to aid in their vocational objectives, while some services were provided to individuals in the field and to other Agency personnel.

A total of 91 clients attended the Center during the fiscal year; 32% went on to vocational training, 12% received educational instruction, 34% achieved competitive placement and 21% were closed out as homemakers or unpaid family workers. During this stay at the Center, clients were involved in dozens of social activities, special projects and plenty of recreational experiences. A recreational specialist added to the staff last year developed an exercise/physical fitness program for all clients in training. Extended use was made of the bowling alley, gymnasium, exercising room, pool and walking trails in the surrounding neighborhood.

And, the special summer program for blind high-school-aged teenagers again offered more than 20 students an opportunity to refine and learn new skills needed to enter the job market or to continue their education. A marked improvement could be seen in the youngsters who were in their last summer of the program.

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind functions as the State Licensing Agency for the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program. The BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM has two major purposes: to provide public, federal and private locations with a high quality food service, and to offer remunerative employment for the state's legally blind and visually impaired.

Fiscal Year 1980-1981 was again financially rewarding for the program's Blind Licensed Vendors and the State Treasury. Eighty-eight vendors operated facilities all over the state that generated sales of \$3,281,012.65. These stand managers paid state sales taxes totaling \$123,395.95.

The program continued a pattern of growth and adaptation to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of people served each year. A broader mix of merchandise was placed in all stands, including more fresh food preparation on site. Soup wells and salad bar operations began to appear in more and more stands as public eating habits appeared to shift slightly away from sandwich, chip and beverage meals.

Budget restraints during the year did hamper the physical expansion of some locations, but several new stands were opened. The Richland County Judicial Center was completed on a site in downtown Columbia, and a new stand was established there to handle not only the workers in the complex, but also those citizens conducting business within its marble walls. A new stand was opened at the Columbia Post Office, and staffed by two vendors in order to serve different work shifts at the facility. Another stand located in the Strom Thurmond Federal Building opened with two vendors to handle the tremendous volume of daily customers.

The Business Enterprise Program continued to train and offer marketing assistance to operators of the 88 stands in an effort to increase the opportunity for blind individuals to gain economic independence. A positive response of all involved in the program helped to achieve the goal, and presented to the public the sense of pride and dedication of each blind vendor.

BLINDCRAFT experienced a successful year with an increase of wholesale and retail sales of handmade products and plants. This increase in sales allowed for the reduction of an overstocked inventory, and the additional revenue helped offset expenses incurred in the operations of the program.

Plant sales from the Horticulture department's greenhouses

provided a marketing outlet for blind and visually impaired horticulturists, and stimulated interest in Blindcraft, thereby increasing the walk-in traffic in the retail shop on Confederate Avenue.

Presently the best selling handmade item is clowns. This constant turnover of items has created a need for more trained workers to meet demand, meaning more work and income for the blind. Blindcraft items have been marketed in New York and Chicago, but a magazine advertisement brought in orders from as far away as California. Locally, the Riverbanks Zoological Park began selling Blindcraft monkeys and bunnies in its gift shop.

Blindcraft continues to serve as an outlet for blind citizens to purchase aids and appliances, leather goods, and other materials needed by them in their daily lives. In addition, blind individuals are allowed to display, for sale, individual handmade items in the Blindcraft retail store.



This legally blind Horry County resident was a client of the Horticulture Program at the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. His greenhouse plants are just part of a "Park-and-Pick" vegetable and plant farm he operates on Highway 9 near Longs, South Carolina.



These items are all handmade by blind individuals who have received training from the Blindcraft Division of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. The retail outlet for Blindcraft products is located at 1430 Confederate Avenue in Columbia.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

The PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS Department offers medical services to both those who are blind and visually impaired and to those who have pathological conditions that if left untreated would lead to blindness. These medical services include the screening for and detection of eye diseases, eye examinations, and follow-up treatments as recommended by an eye specialist. A large part of the program is dedicated to the restoration or retention of sight through hospitalization, surgery, optical aids, and professional guidance and counseling.

Budget restraints again put a halt to many functions before the end of the fiscal year. On March 15th, all routine eye services were discontinued, and ongoing treatments and emergencies only could be sponsored. Other applications were taken and held until the new fiscal year.

Even with financial limitations, the Prevention Department was involved in 181 cataract cases, 16 emergencies, 15 incidents of glaucoma, seven enucleations, 28 reportings of strabismus and 73 other types of eye-impairment conditions. Persons with a visual acuity of 20/200 or less were provided visual aids if use of the aid improved their vision. The department provided 750 such visual aids during the year, along with seven prostheses for persons who had to have their eye or eyes enucleated.

Assistance in securing eye examinations was sought by 1,361 persons. The uncorrected visual acuity of these citizens was usually 20/70 or less, or they were people who had an eye pathology or abnormality.

Many persons needed ongoing treatment that included regular visits to the eye specialist. The Prevention Department sponsored 1,853 re-visits during the year, and an additional 931 cases involved glaucoma follow-up services. There were 39 instances where individuals needed medication on an emergency basis for treatment of eye diseases.

The Mobile Eye-Screening Unit, cosponsored by the Commission for the Blind and the South Carolina Lions Sight Conservation Association, offered free visual acuity and glaucoma checks for 7,713 people across the state. In March of 1980, the van screened its 75,000th person while visiting an industrial site in Anderson.

The Low Vision Clinic is designed to assist people with poor eyesight in order to help them use their residual vision. A total of 69 persons were examined and provided hi-power lenses and telescopic instruments for their use.

Others desiring service from this department were referred to community resource programs due to restrictions within the income needs test and limited program funding.



Mrs. Susan Allinen, an employee of Singer in Anderson, is shown accepting an award designating her as the 75,000th person to be checked by the Mobile Eye Screening Unit cosponsored by the South Carolina Commission for the Blind and the South Carolina Lions Sight Conservation Association.

SPECIAL SERVICES

The Special Services Department of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind is comprised of four separate units: Children's Services, Educational Radio for the Blind, Volunteer Services, and the Media Center.

Employees of the CHILDREN'S SERVICES Department continued to emphasize one-to-one instruction with preschool children, and professional guidance and counseling with parents while serving 360 children, birth to 14 years of age.

An annual workshop for parents of visually impaired preschool children enabled 25 families to learn of the many resources available to aid them in working to raise their children. The families stayed at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center and enjoyed the opportunity to share mutual experiences and support for each other's particular needs and circumstances.

A cooperative effort between the Commission for the Blind and the Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of South Carolina resulted in an instructional program for child development. It was produced to meet the training needs of parents of preschool children in rural areas, distributed on cassette tapes, and broadcast over the Educational Radio for the Blind Network to allow parents to learn basic information in their own homes.

The highlight of a six weeks summer program conducted in cooperation with the Clemson University Extension Service was visits to work sites of gainfully employed visually impaired persons. This Greenville-based program afforded pre-teenage youngsters the opportunity to learn daily living skills such as cooking, marketing, money management and first-aid. Another summer project was to emphasize to the public the idea of integrating visually impaired children into regular community recreational activities.

Camp Leo 1980 marked the end of a full-fledged commitment on the part of the Children's Services Department to the Hilton Head Island camp for blind and visually impaired children. The presence of other camps in the state for blind youngsters resulted in a position taken by the department to offer consultant services to all camps instead of channeling full support to one particular camp. Camp Leo will be funded in the future by the Hilton Head Lions Club with support from other clubs across the state.

EDUCATIONAL RADIO FOR THE BLIND expanded its special

signal in August of 1980 with the opening of a new Educational Radio Network station (WJWJ-FM) in Beaufort. Educational Radio for the Blind is a closed circuit service carried over a sub-channel of all Educational Radio frequencies as a joint effort of the Commission for the Blind and the South Carolina Educational Television Network. This new station enables programming for the blind to be heard all over the lowcountry through the use of special receivers available from the Commission for the Blind.

Broadcast hours were expanded during the year to a current level of 103 per week. The station is now on the air Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm, Saturday from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm, and Sunday from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. More than 1,200 receivers had been issued by the end of the fiscal year, and an order was placed with the manufacturer for additional sets.

Other highlights included a report at the International Biennial Conference of the American Association of Workers for the Blind in Toronto that featured South Carolina's innovative delivery of rehabilitation services through the Educational Radio for the Blind Network. Listeners were again treated to a special broadcast of the Rose Bowl Parade that provided detailed descriptions of the sights and sounds of the New Year's Day event. And, the Commission entered into an agreement with the Educational Television Commission to apply for a federal grant that would offer \$100,000 for the purchase of receivers for the print-handicapped, some of which would be used by the Commission for the Blind.

The VOLUNTEER SERVICES Department, consisting of one full-time director, recruits and trains volunteers to be used throughout the Agency, including his office. Forty-five of these volunteers donate time regularly to Educational Radio for the Blind to record newspaper articles, books, magazines and other printed matter for delayed and live broadcasts. Other volunteers have produced "feely books" for blind children, assisted in children's workshops, provided transportation, offered clerical support, and a variety of other services to the Agency's clients.

During Fiscal Year 1980-1981, 284 volunteers provided 7,488 hours of service to the Agency, and based on a figure of \$5.00 per hour as the value of Volunteer Services in the United States, this represents a contribution of \$37,437.50. Volunteerism doesn't cost, it pays!

Many of the volunteers were honored at luncheons, award presentations, and with promotional announcements over

commercial radio as a way of saying "Thank You" for their time. The Commission is very fortunate to have such a strong, reliable volunteer program.

The MEDIA CENTER has played an important role in making many Special Services projects more meaningful by reproducing materials in braille, large print, and on audio tape, enabling participants to have access to all printed materials. Through a cooperative agreement with the State Department of Education, the Media Center continues to act as a clearinghouse in locating braille books for students. Volunteers in the Media Center tape materials for college students and others in the community, and the Media Center Manager has been certified by the National Library Service to train and certify braille transcriptionists in the state.

During Fiscal Year 1980-1981, the Media Center served 304 clients. Twenty percent of the braille materials produced in South Carolina were completed on the Duxbury Braille Translation System, a component of the Agency's computer. One special project coordinated by the Media Center staff using the computer was the transcription of the Court Reporters Examination for a young lady in Toronto, Canada. A blind examinee, for the first time, had an opportunity to take the test in braille rather than orally.

Braille markers were attached to trees on the grounds of the Governor's Mansion in conjunction with a project by the State Forestry Commission to identify the various specimens for blind visitors. The markers categorize the trees by their scientific name.

In a move to streamline services and cut down on client confusion, the Commission for the Blind transferred its Talking Book Machine and Cassette Player Program over to the State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. This was done on a recommendation of the Library of Congress, the agency responsible for such programs nationwide. The South Carolina State Library was designated as the primary lending agency in the state.

SOURCES OF FUNDS

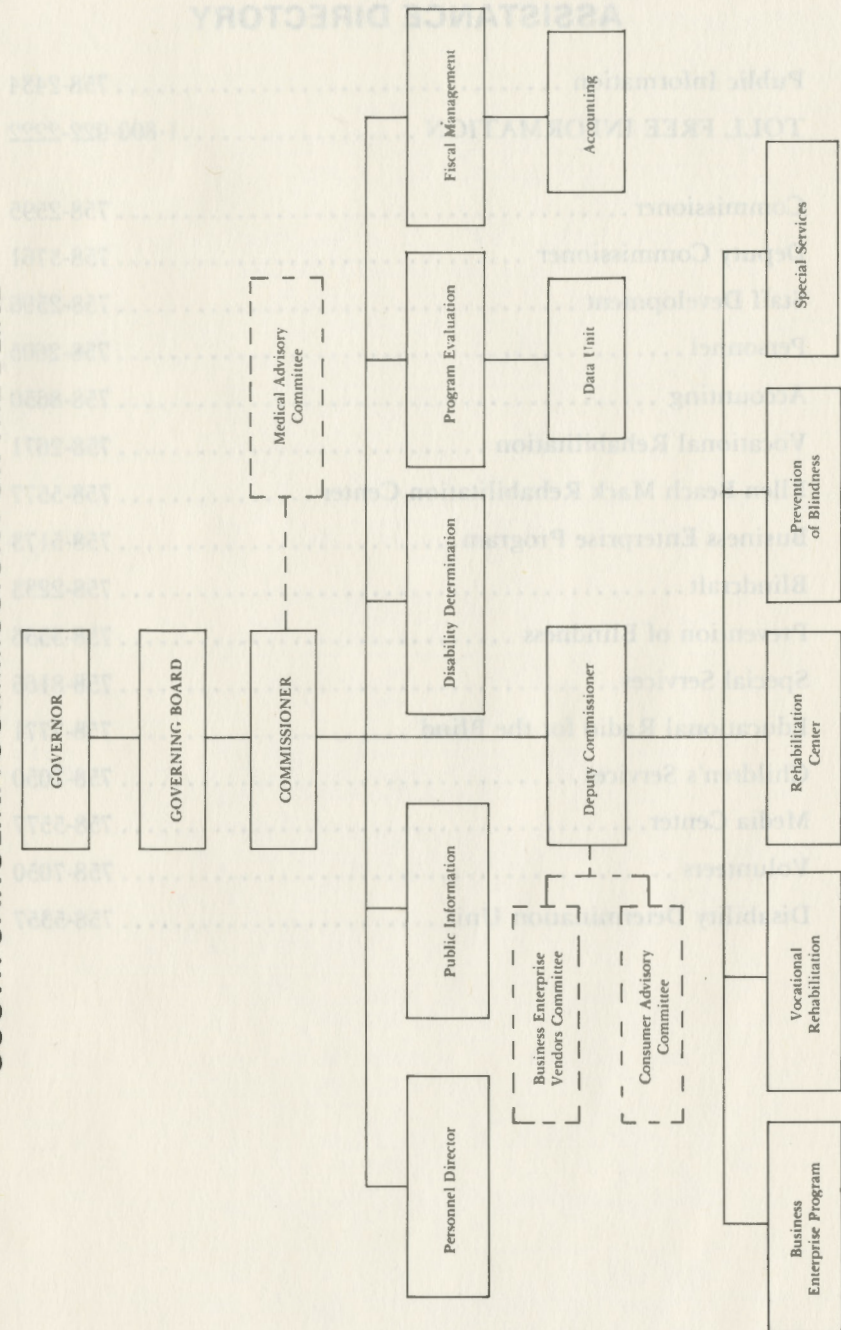
FISCAL YEAR 1980 - 1981

1. Federal Government	\$2,375,027
2. State Government	2,313,525
3. Revenue	<u>25,946</u>
Total - All funds	4,714,498

EXPENDITURES

1. Administration	\$1,165,240
2. Prevention of Blindness	556,724
3. Rehabilitation Services	2,722,181
4. Special Services	<u>270,353</u>
Total Expenditures	\$4,714,498

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND



ASSISTANCE DIRECTORY

Public Information	758-2434
TOLL FREE INFORMATION	1-800-922-2222
Commissioner	758-2595
Deputy Commissioner	758-3761
Staff Development	758-2596
Personnel	758-2605
Accounting	758-8650
Vocational Rehabilitation	758-2671
Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center	758-5577
Business Enterprise Program	758-5173
Blindcraft	758-2233
Prevention of Blindness	758-3556
Special Services	758-8165
Educational Radio for the Blind	758-7771
Children's Services	758-7050
Media Center	758-5577
Volunteers	758-7050
Disability Determination Unit	758-5357

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